

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee

Meeting of Monday, April 12, 2010

Bangs Community Center, Pole Room

Attendance: Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack, Mary Streeter, Carol Gray, Dorwenda Bynum-Lewis, Rob Crowner, Harry Brooks (arrived 4:48).

1. Warrant review technical preparation: The committee meets informally with Kris Pacunas in the Town Room at 4:00pm to review provisions for projection of visual aids during the warrant review.

2. Call to order: Peggy calls the meeting to order at 4:44pm in the Pole Room.

3. Minutes of previous meeting: Carol moves and the committee votes 6-0 to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 5. Nonny moves and the committee votes 6-0 with one abstention to approve the minutes of April 8 with some amendments.

4. Electronic voting: Peggy recaps the electronic voting demonstration conducted at Amherst College on April 8, stating that Harrison Gregg has indicated that he is interested in pursuing the possibility of purchasing the system. TMCC's role is to assemble feedback and, when it is satisfied with the proposal, offer support. The committee begins discussing some of the issues that will need to be addressed, including: whether the system should be used for all votes or as a supplement to current procedures; the insecurity about technology felt by some Town Meeting members; the desire to know for sure how one's vote is recorded; a fallback procedure if the system is not working; and the potential for "hyperaccountability" to warp TM decision-making.

Carol and Harry suggest the establishment of a committee to vet issues and possibly draft the bylaw that would be necessary for the system to be used. The Moderator would be invited to participate in such a committee. Research into how other towns have adopted electronic voting would be done. Carol advocates starting right away rather than waiting until after Annual Town Meeting and asks that a formal discussion of electronic voting issues be put on the committee's agenda for the meeting following the informational forum. The Moderator should be notified of the committee's intent to begin working on it.

The committee discusses collecting feedback when it is presented at Town Meeting and surveying members about specific concerns that have already been raised. Nonny suggests conducting a survey before even beginning consideration of electronic voting and scheduling the demonstration for the end of Town Meeting so as not to prolong Town Meeting. Mary notes that some people will not stay for a demonstration and that getting feedback from these people would also be useful. Nonny suggests putting a question about electronic voting on the TMCC election ballot.

5. Warrant review: Peggy reports that Kris Pacunas will have a laptop and projector set up and ready for the warrant review. Nonny states that questions not answered at the warrant review should be brought to precinct meetings.

6. Info forum: The committee discusses appropriate representation for the informational forum panel, intending that gender equity should be maintained at all events if possible. Rob states that the Finance Committee will choose one of its members to participate.

7. Bus tour: Carol has drafted a preliminary list of stops for the bus tour. Harry states that ACTV will not shoot out of a bus window; instead the camera operator will disembark before filming.

Mary requests that a numbered map showing all of the stops be posted to the Town Meeting website so that people can do the tour themselves at another time.

8. Precinct meetings publicity: Mary states that precinct forum hosts should have copies of all the relevant maps. Mary typically sends a list of helpful tips to precinct forum hosts.

9. Materials for packets: The committee discusses the TMCC election, at which four seats will be available. It is agreed that the election should not be too early in Town Meeting, Nonny proposing the last week in May -- though Peggy notes that the Town Clerk will decide when to schedule it.

10. Meetings: The committee will meet Monday, April 19, at 4:30 in the Police Station community room. The next TMCC meeting will be Friday, April 30 at 4:30 to begin discussing electronic voting; and then the Moderator will be invited to a follow-up meeting on Tuesday, May 4 at 4:45.

11. Adjournment: The meeting is adjourned at 6:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner

Documents distributed at the meeting:

1. agenda
2. draft minutes of meetings of April 5 and April 8, 2010
3. preliminary list of bus tour stops